

# Munro's Hampton Tramway

by R. K. Morgan

Light Railways

Number 61

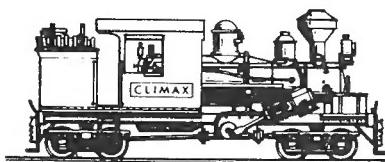
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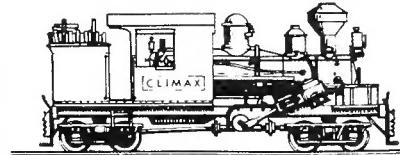
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TALL TIMBER AND TRAMLINES An illustrated introduction to Victoria's timber tramways. 60 pages, 61 photos, 6 maps \$4.10

LAHEY'S CANUNGRA TRAMWAY by R.K.Morgan. Queensland's best known timber tramway. 24 pages, 20 photos, maps \$1.20

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by R. K. Morgan

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**front cover:**

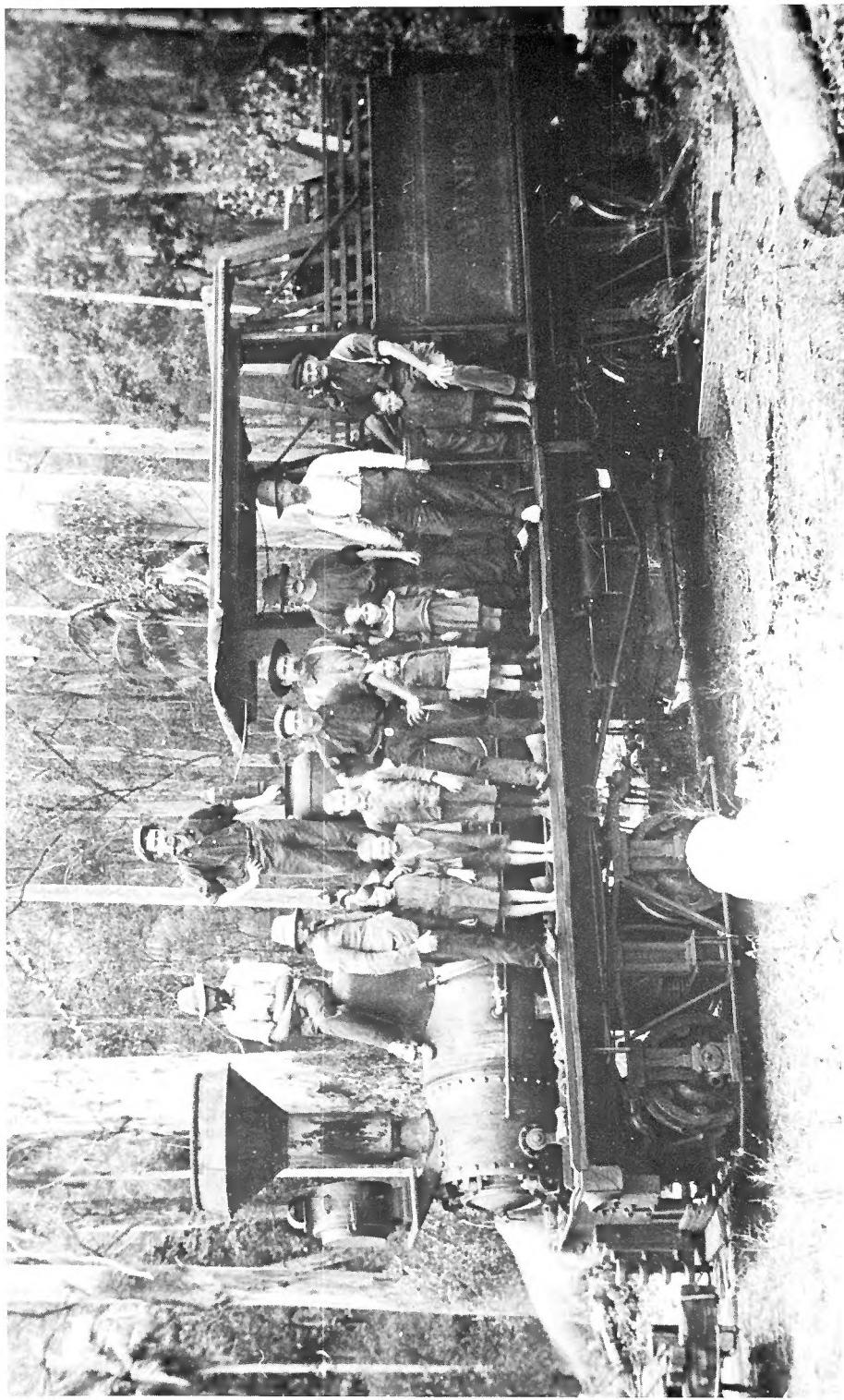
One of the 2 ft 6 in gauge Shay locomotives standing outside Chapman's Store, at Hampton, Queensland, on Munro's timber tramway. Note case and bag of goods on running plate, and hat over whistle. The man sitting on the bag is Joe Brady.

Photo: Mrs M. Shum's collection

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Eight men, six children and a dog pose on one of the locos. Ernie Shum is the man in the white braces just forward of the cab. The man sitting in the cab is Bob Gordon, a bullock driver. Joe Hoskin is standing beside the smokebox. The three children nearest front are Emily, George and Robert Hoskins. The photo was taken at the mill, with the scrub of Perseverance Creek in the background.

Photo: H. Strohfeldt's collection

# Munro's Hampton Tramway

by R. K. Morgan

In the rugged hills some twenty or so miles north-east of Toowoomba can be seen a scar which marks the location of the permanent way of the timber tramway operated by Alexander & Duncan Munro.

The line commenced in about 1896, when the brothers Archibald and Duncan Munro applied to the municipal authority, the Highfields Divisional Board, for permission to construct a tramline along a number of the road easements in the area for the purpose of transporting logs to their sawmill at Palm Tree. These early lines were worked by bullock and horse teams.<sup>1</sup>

The advantages of rail transport soon became evident, and by 1898 the line was extended to Hampton, a station on the Queensland Government Railways Toowoomba to Crows Nest railway.

It appears that wooden rails were used initially, but as they wore out quickly these were soon replaced with steel rails purchased second hand from the QGR. The last wooden rails to survive were located on sidings in the mill areas.

All the early construction was done by hand with pick and shovel, hard yakka in anyone's language, and which accounted for the minimal earth works, tight curves and steep grades.

The Munro brothers seem to have been rather naive in relation to the correct way to go about arranging their affairs. In the first place, they failed to petition the Government for the right to build a tramway, and even the Highfields Divisional Board was apparently unaware of this oversight. The result was that it was not until 1904, eight years after most of the line had been constructed, that the required Bill came before the Parliament. It was presented on behalf of Duncan Munro, and read 'he is authorised to complete, maintain and work a tramline, constructed, or under construction, by him'. At the time, approximately seven miles of track was completed and a further three miles were under construction, which extended the line north-east from the mill into new timber areas.<sup>2</sup>

The Bill met with strong opposition from the local landholders, who claimed that the clearing of the trees encouraged the thick undergrowth, which in turn detracted from the grazing qualities of the land, however, the Bill was carried by a large majority.<sup>1</sup>

Another example of the Munro's unique approach to their business was discovered in 1935 when the Company asked the QGR to consider taking over the tramway. A balloon loop, an engine shed, three feed sheds and an office building of the tramway had existed on Government railway land for many years without any agreement, or rent having been paid for the use of the land. In addition a

gantry crane had been constructed which spanned both the QGR and the tramway in the railway yard.

The tram line to Hampton gave the Company a ready outlet for their sawn timber, and an increasing volume of traffic in the form of this commodity made its way from Palm Tree to Hampton to be transhipped to QGR railway wagons for dispatch to various markets. In those days a team of six horses hauled one or two trucks with a maximum load of 4,000 super feet, under the watchful eye of the driver, George Saal.<sup>2</sup>

## Locomotives

In 1903 Munro's were considering using a locomotive on the line, in particular a Climax geared loco of 10 to 12 tons. The volume of traffic had expanded such that the resources of the horse-teams were being severely strained. In order to assess the possibility of running a locomotive, Munro's requested the District Engineer of the QGR to inspect the line. The report of the Engineer, Mr C.E. Quinlan, dated 19 March 1903, gives an insight into the nature of the line.<sup>3</sup>

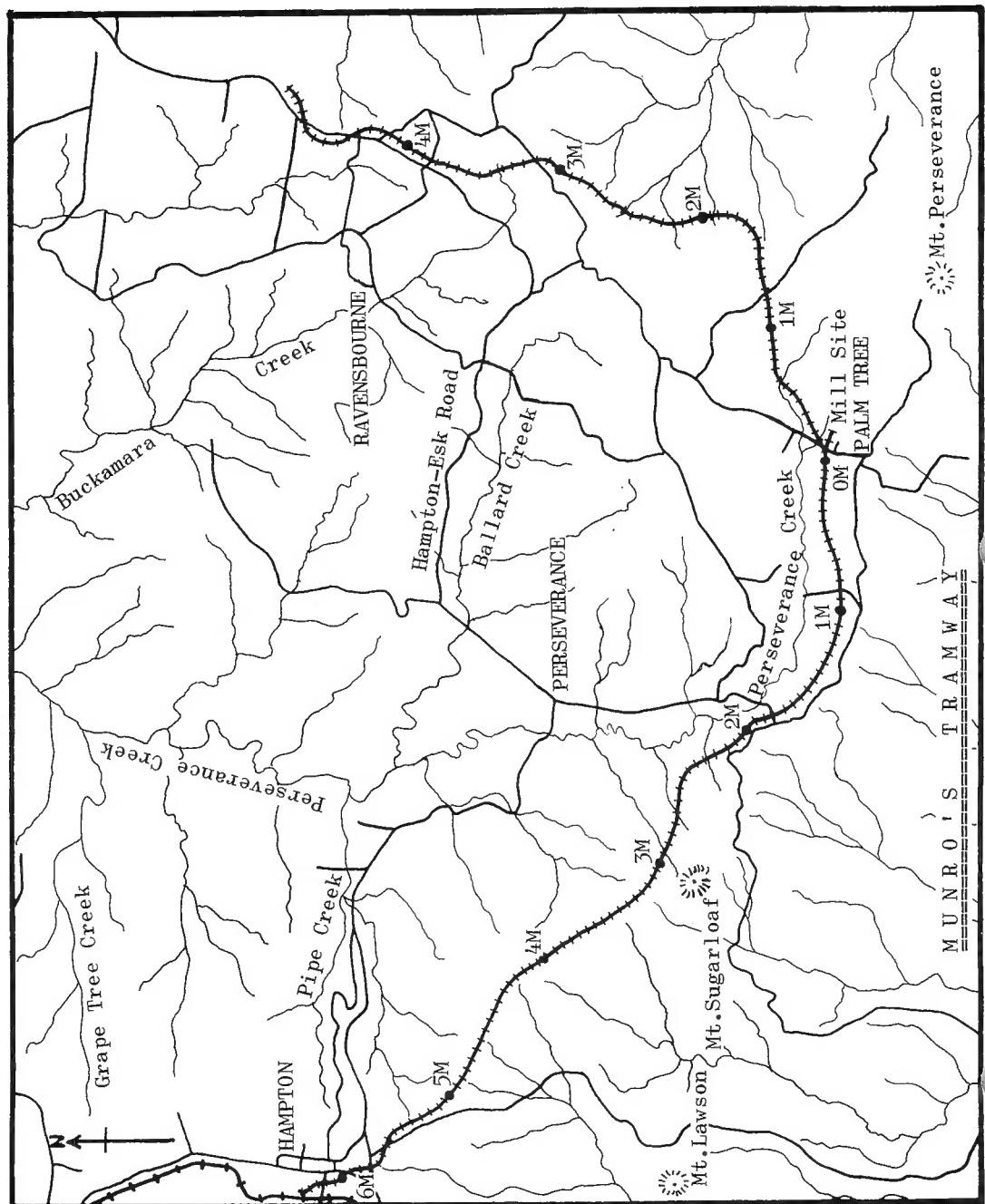
'Minimum radius of curve used is one and a half chains, of which there are a number, whilst the maximum gradient is 1 in 14 for about one chain, with several others of 1 in 15 for short distances, and still more of 1 in 20 to 1 in 25 on inclines five chains or more in length.'

'Iron rails of 40 lb section are used, being fastened together by large fishplates at each joint, and are laid on hardwood sleepers measuring five feet long by eight inches wide, set at 3ft 6 in centres. The line is not ballasted, but is packed and boxed with earth. All of the line is in good running order for the type of locomotive suggested, as long as the maximum speed is not more than five or six miles per hour.'

'There are two close decked bridges, each with spans ranging from eighteen feet to twenty-one feet and carrying handrails along each side for their entire length. Three large culverts are also a feature of the line.'

'Regarding the extensions being made to the line, of which there will be a total of four-and-a-half miles, these are at present under construction . . . On this extension it is intended to run the locomotive for a total of one-and-a-quarter miles from the mill, from where the gradient, 1 in 9, becomes too steep to permit of its use. The extensions are similar in construction to the line from Hampton, except that rails on curves are partly 40 lb section and partly 18 lb, with the straights all being of hardwood rails. It is proposed to lay 40 lb rail continuously for as far as the locomotive is intended to run. At present teams of horses are hauling loads of from six to eight tons to the mill from these extensions.'

'I am of the opinion there should be no difficulty in working a locomotive on this line.'



With this favourable report, Duncan Munro went for a holiday visit to the United States with a view to purchasing a suitable locomotive. As has been stated, he and his brother were thinking in terms of a Climax locomotive. It is not known if he inspected any Climax's, but he returned having placed an order with the Lima Co. for a small Shay loco. In due course the loco arrived at Palm Tree, in a number of pieces, in big crates. Just exactly who the sales representatives of Lima thought would erect their loco in Australia is anyone's guess, but it is probable that they would have been surprised to learn that the erection engineers would be two men, the most qualified of whom was the local blacksmith. Ernie Shum, the smithy, and Olaf Olsen unpacked the crates, sorted out the jig saw puzzle and assembled the engine. That the engine gave such good service is a credit, not only to its design, but to the painstaking care and thoroughness of these two men.<sup>9</sup>

While in the United States, Duncan Munro also ordered a stationary engine, and winch, complete with boiler, for use on the rope haulage section of the line.

The first locomotive, carried the Lima Co. builder's number 906. It was a typical Shay design of slim proportions, with two 7 by 12 in cylinders driving 26½ in diameter wheels on the two bogies. Operating boiler pressure was 125 psi, and the engine was fitted with both steam and hand brakes. The pinions had 14 teeth, and the crown wheels 43 teeth, giving a gear reduction of 3 to 1.5. Overall length was 27 ft 8 in and the engine weighed 30,000 lbs (13¼ tons). The water tank held 730 imperial gallons of water, and was augmented by an extra water tender built at the mill. The loco was fitted with an oil headlamp and a bell and was fuelled with wood, there being abundant supplies of this commodity available, being off-cuts from the sawmill, although at times green timber was responsible for poor steaming. This engine carried the road number 1 on a circular plate on the smokebox door.

The engine performed admirably; Duncan Munro was so impressed with his purchase that he ordered a second locomotive from Lima which arrived in 1908, this carried builder's number 2097. It was similar in all respects to the first engine except that it had a slightly higher gearing, which gave it a better turn of speed. However it was not as good at hauling loads as the first locomotive. The two engines were expected to pull similar loads of six trucks.<sup>2</sup>

A drawing of the second locomotive shows it to have a height of 9ft 9in over the chimney; the bogie wheelbase was 4ft 6in and the total wheelbase was 21ft.

It is reasonable to assume that the first engine also had similar dimensions, despite the different gearing.

The bells on the engines were used quite frequently at road crossings; it appears the drivers reached for the nearest cord to pull, either the bell or the whistle.

When the two engines were in operation, one was used hauling sawn timber from the mill to Hampton; the other bringing in logs from the Bunkers Hill end. This effectively took care of safe working proceedings.

Lord Lamington, the Governor of Queensland at the time, was present at the commissioning of the No.1 engine, and a spur between two gullies not far from the mill

is still known today as Lamington Point.

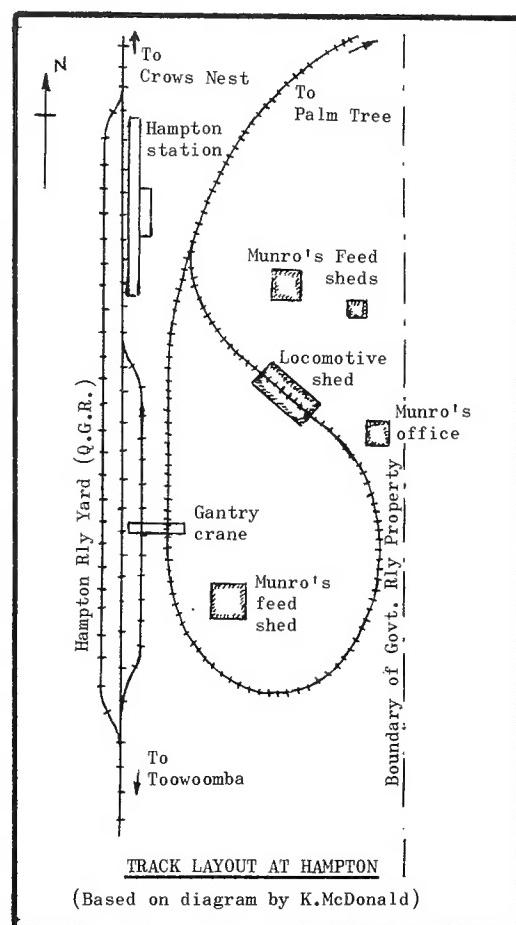
The first driver of the No.1 loco was Mr Shanks; he was succeeded by Mr Smith, and then Olaf Olsen, a driver of some repute, with Joe Brady as his fireman. Brady also became a driver later, along with Bob Walker, a man who really fell in love with the Shays, and who later managed the mill.

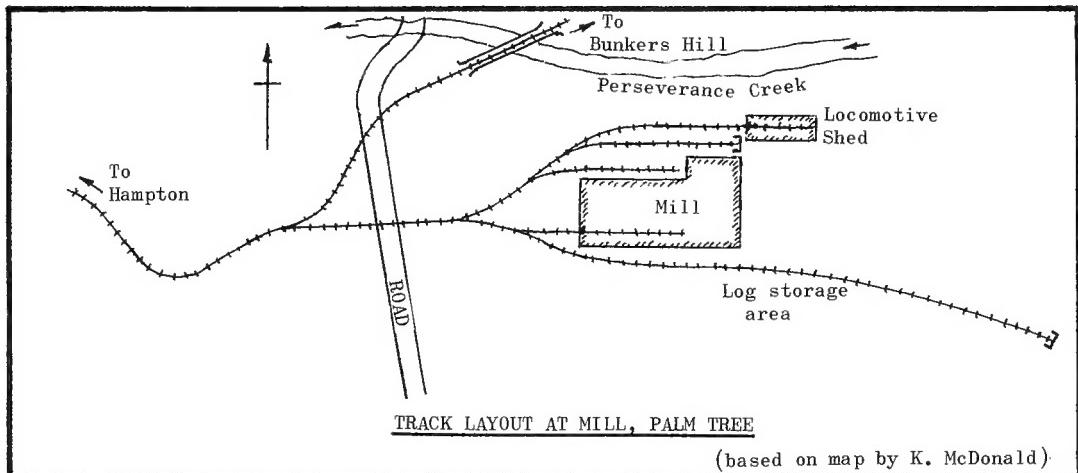
Harry Strofeldt and Percy Croft found themselves called upon occasionally, with other men to fill in when the regular firemen were not available.

### Rolling Stock

All the trucks were fitted with brakes operated by a wooden lever at the side. Every train had a crew of three; a driver, fireman and guard. The guard's job was to ride on the last truck and to assist in controlling the train by applying the brakes before descending a steep grade, and releasing them again to the bottom.<sup>2</sup>

The trucks were coupled by means of 25 to 30 foot long reach poles made of 5in by 5in timber. At each end of the





poles a steel strap was fitted to form a loop for a link and pin type coupling.<sup>2</sup>

A couple of trucks were made into water tenders to augment the locos' water supply. They were fitted with cylindrical tanks which held about 600 gallons.

Passengers travelled on the train regularly. They rode on top of the water tank of the engine, sitting on the wood fuel billets where they were prone to receive the full effect of the sparks coming from the chimney. To try to improve their comfort, the Company built a 'passenger car'. From the fairly sketchy details available it was a four-wheeled flat truck with a seat running along each side. It was fitted with a rail for the passengers to lean against at waist level and had a simple roof. A photograph of a gala occasion on the line when Mr H.P. Somerset, M.A., was honoured for outstanding service in 1910, shows a similar truck without a roof. Harry Strohfeldt recalls that the truck was not used very much after its first run, as on that occasion it had derailed several times. This suggests that it may have had a longer wheelbase than the standard timber bogies. From observation of the photos, the truck appears to have a wheelbase of about 5 feet. The truck had a brake operated by a hand-wheel, clearly an advanced refinement.

In addition to the timber trucks there were two or three navvies' trolleys; these were in reality simply a small flat truck propelled by a man using a pole to push the vehicle and to act as a brake. If the trolleys got up too much speed, they were apt to jump the rails.

As a kid, Harry Strohfeldt and some of the other youngsters took great delight in riding these, usually on a Sunday when there was no traffic on the lines. They would generally ask someone near the mill if they could take a trolley, the request usually being granted by the benevolent adult.

However if there was not one about, the kids would simply take a trolley and ride up and down the line. The management, however, frowned on this practice, because of the risk of accident. On one occasion a couple of boys took a trolley all the way to Hampton. Returning down one

of the grades at a fairly rapid rate, the truck left the rails, and Bill Cook, aged 10, was knocked out cold; the incident steadied the boys up a bit, but not for very long.<sup>2</sup>

In 1908 two boys aged about 10 years, Harry Strohfeldt and Joe Cook, got a job holding the tapes for the surveyors pegging the extension of the line from the pumping house to the terminus at Bunkers Hill. The boys worked with the men from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. each day, six days a week, and provided their own horses. Harry was paid two shillings a day, but when asked many years later Joe said, 'I don't think they paid me anything'<sup>1</sup>

#### Description of the tramway

The completed line left Hampton and headed south-east for approximately six miles, skirting the Sugarloaf Mountain where there was a deep cutting and then crossing two big bridges, the first being known as 'Clarks' the second as 'McQuilans', then on to the sawmill which was located at the end of a quarter mile long spur. The mainline swung left and headed down to cross the 'first bridge', a big bridge some 300 feet long and 60 feet above the stream bed of Perseverance Creek. The line then continued in a north-easterly direction for about two miles crossing the 'second' and 'third' bridges to a spot where the 1908 extension branched off to the left.

The old line carried on for about half a mile to the top of a steep incline where a winding engine was located which hauled the loaded log trucks up an incline by means of a cable. The incline dropped on a 1 in 9 grade for half a mile, the limit of the cable, then continued on a lesser grade which was worked by horse teams for about another half mile. There were two bridges on the section, one of which was over a dry gully on the steepest part of the incline.

The 'mainline' continued in a north-easterly direction, over undulating country, with some steep pinches both for and against the load. About three miles from the mill was the 'pump house', established to water the engines, from where the line meandered through very scenic country until it arrived at Bunkers Hill, near Ravensbourne, and close to the present road to Esk.



A very early view of Munro's tramway showing wooden rails on the straight section and steel rails on the curve. This was taken at the time of a Munro family picnic.

Photo: courtesy the Munro family

Much of the line was built on a right-of-way through the farms held by Munro's on a 99 year lease. At each property boundary, and where other fences crossed the line, gates had to be provided and were required to be kept shut. These gates provided some interesting diversions in the operation of the line.

A condition of the agreement concerning the lease of the right-of-way from the farmers was that the tramway should carry all the farm produce to Hampton free of charge. This meant that periodically there was a considerable tonnage of bagged potatoes and corn transported.

#### The Palm Tree Community

The firm of A. & D. Munro made its presence felt over a wide area. They had a mill at Geham, half way to Toowoomba, but it was smaller than the one at Palm Tree and the larger logs cut in the Hampton area were taken down the line to be milled at Palm Tree, to be returned up the line as sawn timber.<sup>8</sup> Munro's also had a mill in Toowoomba, near where the Toowoomba Foundry now stands.

At Palm Tree, logs were brought to the mill not only by the tram, but also by bullock team. Eight teams were owned by the company and were grazed in a 1,200 acre paddock located over a ridge just south of the mill; the paddock was purchased by the Strohfeldt brothers in

1937, after the mill closed. In addition a number of private bullock teams were engaged to haul logs to the mill.

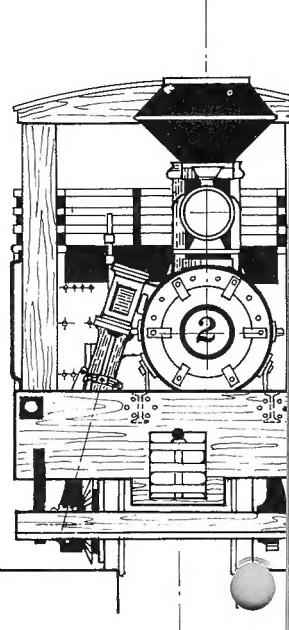
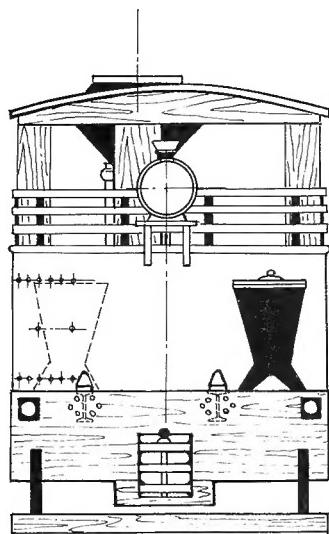
The timber species brought in were mainly hoop pine, black butt, tallow wood, woolly butt and grey iron bark.<sup>2</sup>

The Palm Tree mill was steam operated, and had five saws - a frame saw for the initial splitting of the logs, a rack saw for quartering the logs and two circular breaking-down saws, and a docking saw.

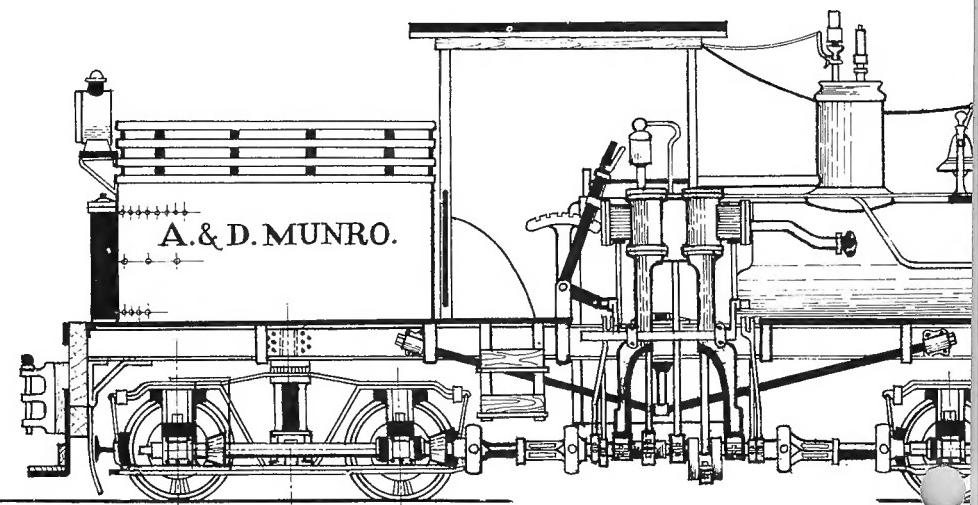
The men worked a ten hour day at the mill, for approximately three shillings in the early days. A dynamo was installed to provide electricity for lighting in the mill, it being driven from the main drive of the steam engine in the mill. Lights were suspended over each saw to enable the work to proceed early in the morning and late in the evening. With the introduction of the eight hour day, the lighting plant saw little further use.

The mill was the nucleus of a community which found employment at the mill, in the forest and on the tramway. The twenty or so simple cottages were arranged in two rows. A store, run by Munro's catered for most of the needs of the people.

The butcher's shop was run by John Kynock, and later by John's son Dave. Mrs Strohfeldt baked batches of four big loaves of bread in a camp oven which she sold around the community for a penny a loaf; others baked their own bread.

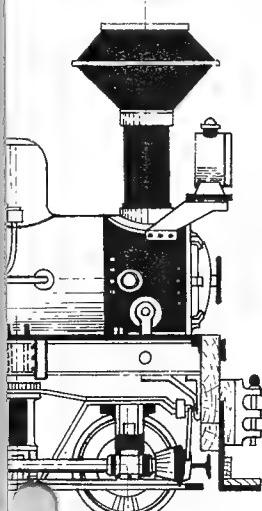


K. MC CARTHY 5/78



Inches. 12 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Feet.

LIMA SHAY No. 2097



Duncan Munro donated land in a high position for the school which was built in 1900, and doubled as the community hall. Dances were held there from time to time, and school picnics in the surrounding grounds. The school teachers, who were provided by the Government, usually came in on one of the small four-wheel flat-deck gangers trolley. There is no doubt this would have been a unique experience for the teacher, coasting down the grades and around the curves, while he sat on his ports (cases), with one of the mill employees acting as skipper to apply the brake at the appropriate time. On the up grades both men would get off and push the trolley up to the top, where they remounted to descend the next slope.<sup>4</sup>

The Palm Tree community was always proud of its rugby football team. Locals claimed that their tough timber worker team would beat Toowoomba's best teams, had they had the chance to play them. The team earned a reputation for 'playing the man' and from all accounts most of the games were pretty rough.

When Bob Walker was manager of the mill in the early 1930s, a further qualification which helped to obtain a job at the mill was the ability to play football. This no doubt helped maintain the standard of the Palm Tree team.

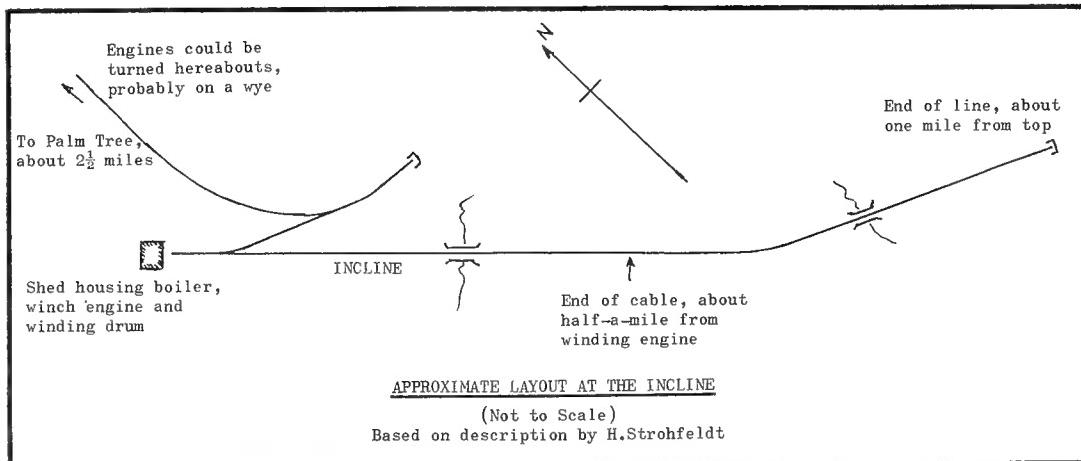
#### Later Operation

The trains usually consisted of a locomotive and six trucks. When taking sawn timber to Hampton, the trucks were all coupled behind the engine; but when bringing logs in from Bunkers Hill it was the practice to push three trucks ahead, and pull three trucks behind the engine. When the train came to one of the 1 in 15 grades the three leading trucks were pushed up and left, then the loco returned for the other three trucks. When the train arrived at a point known as Jack Muller's loop, the trucks were remarshalled with the engine leading, as from there on it was predominantly downhill. At the bridge just before the mill, if it was an extra heavy load, the train was again split, the engine taking three trucks at a time up to the mill.

At the many log loading ramps along the line, the locomotives were used to load logs onto the trucks by parbuckling, a method whereby a rope from the engine was led through a pulley attached to a handy tree or to the line itself, then to the log. The engine was then reversed away from the pulley thus hauling the log to the line, up skids and onto the truck.

As mentioned earlier, a feature of the line were the numerous gates which permitted the line to pass through fences of the farm properties. These gates were usually kept closed to prevent stock wandering. The practise was for the fireman to open the gate, and the guard to close it after the train had passed through.

These gates were a real nuisance to the crews. Harry Strohfeldt observed, 'We broke quite a few'. Theoretically the train was supposed to come to a halt to let the fireman open the gate and again for the guard to rejoin the train. As there were many gates, this involved a lot of stopping and starting. Drivers attempted to speed up the operation by merely slowing down, which meant that the fireman was expected to swing down off the moving engine, run ahead



Lady passengers perched amongst the wood billets on the water tank, where they were prone to catch sparks. Joe Brady is the driver in the cab, Fred Kafer is the fireman just in front of the cab, and the man in the bowler hat is thought to be W. J. Munro.

Photo: Mrs M. Shum's collection

of the train, open the gate and leap back on as the loco came past. Sometimes, especially when the loco was pushing three trucks ahead of it, the trucks reached the gate first, and rendered the gate more or less a write off.

At the other end of the train, the guard was also expected to jump off, close the gate, chase the train and clamber aboard while it continued, albeit slowly. One guard, Willy Strohfeldt (Harry's brother) got fed up with having to sprint smartly after the disappearing train especially as he was somewhat lame, and one day he simply let the train go, tramped back to the mill, and complained to W.J. Munro: 'Is a feller supposed to run like a lunatic to catch the train after I shut a gate?' The rules were that drivers were supposed to stop. The complaint brought a warning to all drivers, and things improved for a little while.

Some of the gates were sprung or counterbalanced so that they swung open at a gentle nudge from the train, and automatically shut after the train had gone through. However, these gates suffered somewhat from the thirty-ton nudges they received, and were regularly rendered inoperative with a splintering crash. As can be readily imagined, these procedures became all the more interesting on dark wet nights!

The operation of the incline is of interest. A stationary steam engine drove a winch drum on which was wound half-a-mile of steel cable. The winch stood at the top of a fairly steep grade of about a mile in length. The cable reached approximately a half-mile down the steepest section. Trucks were brought up to the end of the cable two at a time by a team of bullocks. The cable was attached to the trucks and the bullock driver told the winch driver to haul the trucks up on a phone installed for the purpose. At

the top the trucks were manhandled into a siding for the loco to pick up, and two empty trucks were lowered down the incline. Meanwhile the bullock team returned to the end of the line. Another man unhitched the empty trucks from the cable, and tried to control their descent down the remaining slope by means of the brakes.

Braking the trucks was a tricky business. Too much pressure, and the brake grabbed, causing the trucks to skid out of control. Too little pressure failed to have any effect in slowing the truck, with the result that several men came to grief on this stretch of line.

Sometimes the brakes on the trains jammed on, and the string of trucks skidded down the hill, providing some exciting moments. On one occasion Fred Muller, a new driver, was in charge. The brakes jammed going down a 1 in 20 grade, and Fred frantically tried everything to release the brakes and subdue the train. Fortunately it kept to the rails, and on arriving at the bottom of the hill, skidded to a standstill. Fred, wiping a fevered brow was heard to comment, 'Well, I stopped her, anyhow!'

At the incline, the crew were expected to load and send up 8 trucks each day. The winch operated at this location until about 1920, when it was taken out to Bunkers Hill, where it was used to winch logs in to a landing at the end of the line. Harry Strohfeldt was impressed with its power and recalls, 'It could pull a thousand super at a dead snig'. It was eventually sold to Jim Barber of Esk, who used it for hauling pine logs to a landing for loading onto road wagons. In about 1940, it was sold to Owen Affleck, who did away with the boiler and steam engine, and fitted a Fordson truck engine to drive the winch drum. It still lies in the bush near Ravensbourne, on a property which rejoices under the descriptive name of 'Misery'.



Two bullock teams attached to an engine which had derailed when it ran into earth washed across the rails. From left the men are Harry Strohfeldt, Bob Walker - the manager, and Fred Schumann - bullock driver.

Photo: H. Strohfeldt's col.



A special passenger train, possibly on the occasion of the visit of Mr H. P. Somerset in 1910; or the visit of Lord Lamington, Governor of Queensland. Note the timber bogies modified to carry passengers.

Photo: courtesy the Munro family

Although the mill officially finished work at 10.00 p.m. the trains would arrive with loads at anytime up to midnight. The locos steamed into the yard in the dull gleam of light provided by the oil headlamps. These late hours resulted in some strain on the family relationships of the crews at times.

#### Accidents

Like any timber community Palm Tree had its accidents. Some occurred on the tramway. Falling off the trucks when braking or shunting often lead to serious injury or death if the unlucky man was run over by the train.

William Strohfeldt, Harry's father, a bullock driver, had his finger badly crushed between trucks while shunting in 1911. Eight weeks later he fell beneath the wheels of his bullock wagon and was run over. The accident occurred on a Saturday, and the whole community was mobilised to aid the badly injured man. To get him to hospital in Toowoomba, W.J. (Billy) Duncan drove the locomotive, which he was known not to like riding on, let alone drive, to Hampton. Behind the loco was a timber bogie on which Dr Harlin and the injured man were made as comfortable as possible. Despite the efforts of the

helpers, William failed to recover and died in Toowoomba Hospital two days later. He was forty-four years of age.<sup>2</sup>

Minor derailments were not uncommon and a few re-railing wedges were kept on each locomotive. They were made of 3in wide hardwood about 3 feet long and tapered from 6in to a point at one end. A steel strap bound the edge to reduce wear while adding strength. The wedges were placed under the wheels and beside the rail, and the loco was driven back onto the track. Jacks were also used.

One of the locos once derailed on the Black Flat, about a mile on the Hampton side of the mill. Some earth had washed over the line, and the engine had run into it. To re-rail it wedges were placed under the wheels, and two of Munro's bullock teams were harnessed in tandem, and hitched to the rear buffer beam. Fred Schumann and Harry Strohfeldt drove the teams and a photograph shows the bullocks straining at the chains in the attempt to get the engine back on the 'straight and narrow'.

An unusual derailment occurred near the Sugarloaf cutting on the track to Hampton, when a truck loaded with sawn timber derailed and rolled a fair way down the hill. To recover the truck and load, a rope from the truck was placed through a block on the high side of the track and attached to the loco. As the loco backed off to haul the

truck up it derailed and fell against the wall of the cutting fracturing a number of steam pipes from which escaping steam badly scalded the driver Joe Brady.

### Anecdotes

Some insight can be gained into the life of Palm Tree in the following stories.

Once W.J. (Billy) Munro (son of Duncan Munro) came to Fred Kafer, the engine driver, and after inspecting the engine, said, 'You've got no sand on the engine. What'd you do if she got away from you?'

Fred: 'I'd jump off and let her go.'

W.J.: 'Why don't you use your block?' (meaning his head, but Fred thought W.J. meant a pulley block).

Fred: 'I haven't got a b..... block!'

W.J. (who had Scottish ancestry) made no secret of the fact that he did not like to ride on the engines, and he would never cross the 'First' bridge on one. Once he jumped off an engine and landed in a luxuriant growth of Scotch thistles. He is reported to have said he did not mind the jump, but he did not like landing among his country-men!

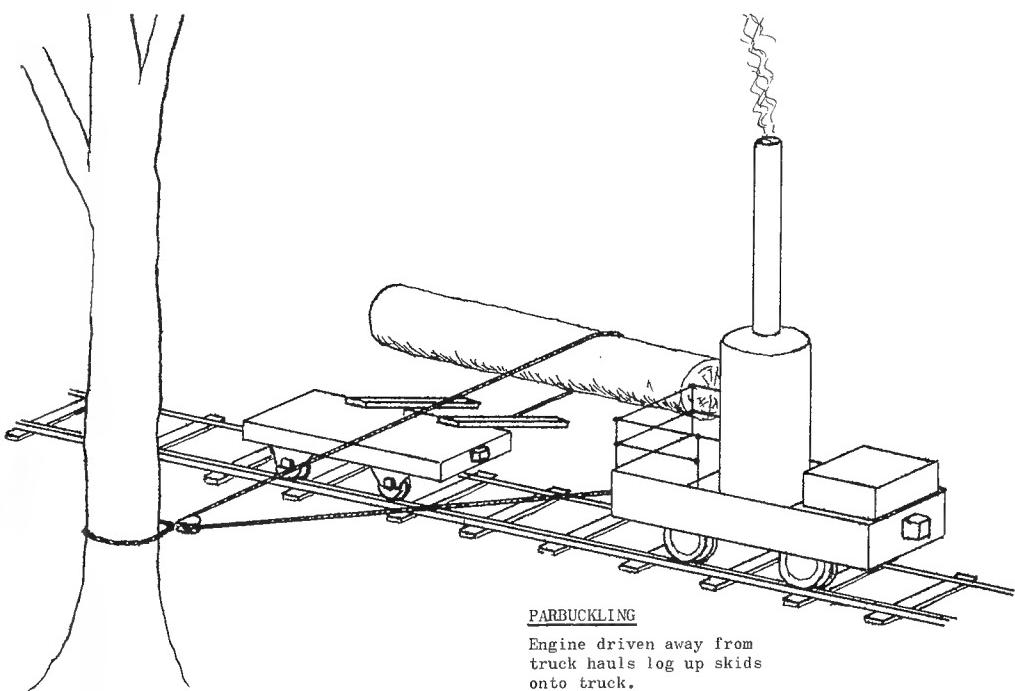
In the 1920s a public hall was built at Perseverence, which became the scene of the local revelling. One night at a dance, some of the young bloods put a dummy dressed as a man in the ladies' toilet. A couple of the ladies received a scare, and eventually word got to some of the menfolk that there was a man in the ladies department'. A few of them went to investigate, and after shooing all the women away, one man went in. In the dim light he saw the figure of a man

sitting in state, 'Hey, mate, you'd better get out of here', he said and pulled his leg. To his utter surprise, the leg came away in his hand, and the figure fell to the floor. Everyone had a good laugh that night.

'Hell Fire Jack' was a timber cutter, and helped clear the line when the extension was being put through to Bunkers Hill. Jack had an unusual way of stealing potatoes . . . . he'd dig them up and carefully replant the stalk of the potato bush. Harry's father had a paddock of potatoes below his house, quite near the railway line. One day a Scandinavian chap, Hans Petersen, said to Mr Strohfeldt, 'I saw a blotchy big kongaroo-rot in your spuds last night - Yack Hellfire'. The next night, Mr Strohfeldt was down near the spud patch with a double barrel shotgun. He heard some movement, and saw a vague shadow moving in the potatoes. He aimed the gun into the air, and let fly with both barrels. It is said that Hellfire Jack broke the standing long jump record by a fair margin, and lit out for the hills.<sup>2</sup>

Another man was losing grapes. He got his shotgun, also, and one night saw something white moving along the vines. He aimed and fired . . . and with a startled whinny, his white mare galloped across the paddock.

Harry Strohfeldt drove teams of from 18 to 22 bullocks while snigging timber in the bush. He has a pair of bullock horns mounted which came from one of his beasts, and measure a neat four feet across. He gave me this poem, written by Emil Tarden, an Englishman, who worked for Munro's in the early days, as a tribute to Olaf Olsen.



### MUNRO'S TRAIN

I was working up at Hampton,  
Strange, but something bid me write  
These few verses that the mill hands  
May in coming days recite.

Its about Olaf Olsen who  
Was forever driving Munro's train,  
Bringing up great loads of timber  
In spite of the heavy rain.

For I could hear the engine puffing  
As she came along the line,  
With God knows how many tons of hardwood,  
And as many tons of pine.

Olaf Olsen he was driver  
and ever wide awake  
Whilst his comrade Joseph Brady  
Was careful on the brake.

Sure we have had many drivers,  
I believe Mister Shanks was first,  
And Mister Smith followed him,  
Some say he was the worst.

For in driving Munro's engine  
He never did have luck,  
As day after day I heard them say  
The engine would be stuck.

But then we got a driver  
Who came from beyond the seas,  
Ever civil and obliging  
With occasions for to please.

And his name of Olaf Olsen  
As I am proud to tell;  
And wherever he may roam in life  
His comrades wish him well.

Yes, we'll wish success to Olsen  
and likwise to fireman Joe  
True and faithful servants  
To Messrs A. and D. Munro.

Olaf Olsen roamed out to Dalby, where for many years he was manager of the town's power house. That in itself was a remarkable achievement for a man who had no real qualifications. When I asked Harry what qualifications he might have had Harry said 'None; but he was a clever man, he'd read a lot, and what he read he remembered'. Last days

Bob Walker managed the mill for some years, and in 1935 Tom Munro, W.J.'s brother took over from Walker for twelve months. During this year, the Company negotiated with the QGR to exercise their option to take the line over, but the offer was declined. The business was then leased to Bob Walker for another twelve months, and was finally closed in 1936, and sold up. The locomotives

remained at the mill, having been dismantled to some extent for scrap metal. The rails were sold for scrap to J.J. Bloomer of Brisbane, and were all removed in 1937. Very little evidence of the mill is still visible, and only the earthworks through the country mark the location of the permanent way. The bridges gradually rotted away, and in 1974 the derelict remains of the locomotives were taken, along with a couple of old log bogies, to the Illawarra Light Railway Museum Society, where an attempt is to be made to restore one of the locos as a static exhibit. Just below Harry Strohfeldt's house is a cast iron box sunk a foot or so into the ground, which housed the points lever for the junction above the mill which led out to Bunkers Hill.

#### Acknowledgments

In compiling the foregoing, grateful acknowledgement is made to Mr Harry Strohfeldt for sharing from his vast fund of memories; Mrs Maggie Croft, the daughter of Ernie Shum; Mr George Bond who made available his files and the information he has collated over many years, and members of the Munro family living in Toowoomba.

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2. From personal interviews with Mr Harry Strohfeldt by the author.
3. District Engineer's Report, QGR., 19th March 1903.
4. From personal interviews with Mrs Maggie Croft (nee Shum), the daughter of Ernie Shum.
5. Letter from W.J. Munro to W. Henderson (undated).
6. *Courier*, 2nd April 1910.
7. *ARHS Bulletin*, September 1945.
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# Recovery of the locomotives

by K. McCarthy

The shay relics at Palmtree were donated to the Illawarra Light Railway Museum Society by the Groves family in a letter dated 15 April 1974. It appears that prior to this many people had expressed the desire to see the locos retrieved for preservation, but no person or society had actually placed a proposition before the owners.

During the early 1970s the overgrown area beside the gully where the locos had rested since c. 1935 was cleared for pasture and the time had arrived for their disposal for scrap as the pieces were in the gully and spread over a useable paddock. The ILRMS request, therefore was made at the opportune time.

On 25 July 1974 the boiler, frame and tank/bunker of No. 2097 arrived at the ILRMS museum site at Albion Park N.S.W. together with one bogie frame and various transmission parts.

On 30 August five ILRMS members worked at Palmtree collecting and numbering shay parts scattered over the property, in neighbouring farms and in the nearby gully to form a second delivery load to N.S.W. In addition to the boiler and frame unit of No. 906, a total of 91 other parts were numbered and these were delivered to Albion Park on 7 October. Three of the five members were able to make the journey due to free tickets supplied by Ansett Airlines of Australia between Sydney and Brisbane.

Over the last 12 months work has progressed slowly on the restoration of No. 2097 towards static display condition. Work being carried out on these relics will be done in such a way that it will not destroy parts which could be used at some later stage to restore the locos to operating condition.

The loco is mounted at present on two 2ft gauge shop bogies. The first task was the straightening of the rolled steel joist chassis and the strengthening of a badly corroded section. During this stage the chassis was

retrussed using parts from No. 906. The boiler and chassis has been prime-coated and the bunker/tank, smoke stack and smoke box given a finish coat of black enamel.

The badly rotted ends of the front buffer beam were next trimmed and framed. The replacement of the beam with new timber baulks was avoided at this stage as special cramps would have been needed to support the RSJ chassis members if the buffer beam, which provides the major cross support, had been removed.

Work has now commenced on timber preparation for the new driver's cab and when this reaches an advanced stage the boiler will be lagged with timber stakes and clothed with galvanized flat steel and bands.

In the mean time transmission parts and motion linkages have been rubbed back, primed and painted and these are now stored awaiting the day when reconstruction reaches the stage when they will be needed.

Although not enough parts were found at Palmtree to fully restore one locomotive, with the exception of the cylinders, pistons and drive rods, at least one of each major part is on hand from which others can be made and adequate parts were also recovered to make up two 2ft 6in gauge bogies.

In a letter from P.E. Percy, the curator of the Lima Locomotive Works archives of Lima Ohio, to Mr V. Groves, (the owner of the property at Palmtree on which the shay relics were located) dated 5 January 1974 the following details were revealed:

No. 1. was shipped from the factory to 'D Munro, Toowoomba Queensland' on 4 August 1904, Builders No. 906

No. 2 was shipped on 25 January 1908, Builders No. 2097.

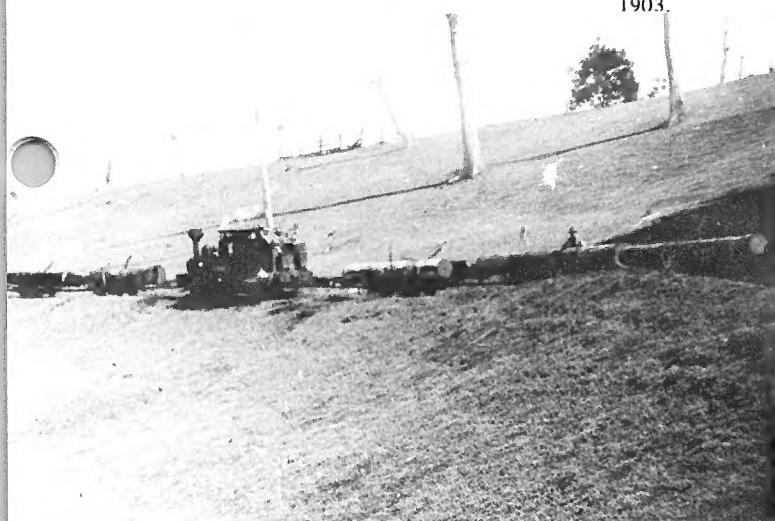
Both locos were built to the No. 834 plan, which was built for the Mishler Lumber Co of Missouri U.S.A. in 1903.

**Photo, page 16** One of Munro's Shay locomotives standing on temporary 2 ft gauge bogies at the ILRMS Museum at Albion Park, NSW.

Photo: K. McCarthy

**Left** A log train, probably near Bunkers Hill. The make-up of the train was usual on that section, with three logs behind and three logs ahead of the engine. Note the guard on the second last log.

Photo: H. Strohfeldt's coll.



Mr Percy stated that 906 and 2097 were 99% identical to 834 having two 7in x 12in cylinders, built to 30in gauge with a 31½in diam. boiler, wood fuel and a diamond type stack.

906 however had 26½in diam wheels and a 160 p.s.i. boiler pressure while 2097 had 26in diam wheels and 150 p.s.i. boiler pressure. The difference in wheel diameters was no doubt due to tyre thicknesses.





**Top Left** The boiler and frame of No. 1 at Palm Tree, 30 August 1974, just prior to being transported to the ILRMS Museum.

**Bottom left** Pair of Grover's bogies at Palm Tree, used for timber transport.

**Above** Shay parts laid out ready for the carrier, at Palm Tree, 30 August 1974.

All above photos: D. Estell

**Right** Harry Strohfeldt kneeling beside an iron point-lever box, a quarter-of-a-mile on the Hampton side of the mill, at the junction of the mill sidings with the Bunker's Hill line. The formation of the line to Hampton can be seen along the foot of the trees in the distance.

Photo: R. K. Morgan





Above One of the Shay locomotives at Palm Tree

Below This shows a timber bogie modified to carry potatoes which the Company was obliged to carry free as part of the agreement enabling the tramway to run through certain farms. At the front is the fireman, Fred Kafer, and the driver is Joe Brady.

Photos: Mrs M. Shum's collection

